



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

GUIDELINES FOR ACCEPTING AND SERVING DONATED FOODS

These general guidelines for applying the *Rules and Regulations Governing Retail Food Establishments in the State of Colorado* are provided by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Consumer Protection Division. Additional information about the rules and regulations may be obtained by calling 303-692-3620, or visiting the division's web page - www.cdphe.state.co.us/cp

INTRODUCTION:

These guidelines were developed for use by agencies that accept and serve donated foods as well as health departments that inspect such operations.

GUIDELINES:

Colorado Retail Food Establishment Rules and Regulations, Chapter 3 states in part:

A. “Food shall be in sound condition free from spoilage or contamination and shall be safe for human consumption.”

- Accept only canned goods in good condition and free of critical seam dents. Home canned foods are not to be accepted.
- Food lacking labels, showing signs of fire or water damage are not to be accepted.
- Domestic fowl, fish, and animals that will be processed under USDA, FDA, or Division of Wildlife inspection can be accepted.
- Donated game animals should be processed in USDA, FDA, or Department of Agriculture inspected facilities. Any animal that has tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD) should not be consumed.
 - Additionally information on CWD can be obtained from the Division of Wildlife website at <http://wildlife.state.co.us/CWD/index.asp>
- Foods donated from food service establishments that were properly prepared, not subjected to temperature abuse and not offered to the public in salad bars, other self service buffet lines, or previously served to customers can be accepted.

B. “Food shall be obtained from approved sources that comply with the applicable laws relating to food and food labeling. Food prepared in a private home shall not be used or offered for sale.”

- Receivers of donated food products need to maintain accurate records. The records should include: The name and quantity of products donated as well as the name, address, and phone number of the person or donating firm.
- Raw produce received from home gardens would be allowable as long as the produce is washed prior to preparation or service.

C. “At all times, including while being stored, prepared, displayed, dispensed, packaged, or transported, food shall be protected from cross-contamination between foods and from potential contamination...”

- All foods should be kept up off the floor in covered, labeled containers. Foods must be protected from sewer or water lines and drippings from raw meats and poultry. If donated foods are to be transported from the donation site to feeding sites, the food should be in tightly covered containers, maintained at proper temperatures and in a clean vehicle.

D. “The temperature of potentially hazardous foods shall be 41°F or below or 135°F or above, at all times...”

Temperature abuse of potentially hazardous food is one of the leading causes of foodborne illness, and therefore, assurance that food temperatures were properly maintained should be assured. Potentially hazardous foods are those foods that require some form of temperature control, refrigeration or hot holding to maintain the integrity and safety of the food product. The receiving agency should ask the following questions to help in determining if the product has been held at proper temperatures:

- When was the food prepared?
 - Accepting foods within one day of preparation and quickly frozen is recommended.
- When was it placed into refrigeration?
 - If potentially hazardous foods are left in the temperature danger zone of greater than 41°F and less than 135°F for over four hours accumulated time, bacteria may have a chance to grow to dangerous levels. These foods should not be used.
- How was the food cooled?
 - Potentially hazardous foods must be cooled quickly to 70°F or less within two hours and to 41°F within the next four hours to prevent the growth of bacteria. This may be accomplished by placing containers in an ice bath to cool, or by placing in shallow pans and placing in the refrigerator or freezer and stirring. The temperatures of the cooling food should be monitored routinely.
- What is the current temperature of the food?
 - Food should be received at 41°F or less or 135°F or above.
- Was the food reheated or thawed? (if yes, how many times)
 - Only one reheating and/or thawing is recommended.

Model Food Salvage Code

If reconditioning of donated food is planned, adequate facilities should be provided and the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), “Model Food Salvage Code” should be used as a guideline.

Copies of the guideline can be obtained from the AFDO website <http://www.afdo.org/publications.asp>

Metal cans should be free from rust, dents, and visible defects. Metal or glass containers with press caps, screw caps, pull rings, or other types of openings which have been in contact with water or liquid foam as a result of fire fighting, flood, sewer backups, etc., should not be reconditioned and utilized. Acceptable metal containers of food may be reconditioned by thorough washing and sanitizing. Cans showing surface rust should have labels removed and buffed until free of rust. All reconditioned containers shall be properly relabeled. Labels must indicate that the product has been reconditioned.